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A Quicksilver Farewell

By Jeannette Smyth

The Quicksilver Times, Washington's only underground newspaper, ended its three-year existence yesterday when 10,000 copies of Volume IV, Number 9—"The Last Issue"—hit the streets.

According to a spokesman, the radical newspaper had appeared regularly every two weeks virtually without underground competition since June, 1969, when it was founded following the demise of The Washington Free Press, another underground paper which folded after three years.

Yesterday's edition features a long explanation from the staff commune of "Why we're folding. . ."

"Why is it then that Quicksilver's closing? Primarily because of a number of interrelated staff and money problems. . ."

A collective spokesman said yesterday, "We failed mainly because of money. It's difficult to get support from advertisers because of our politics. We didn't make enough money through advertising. Our financial

problems started last December. We'd had problems last summer, but it seemed like we pulled out of that."

The spokesman said Quicksilver staffers are trying to pay off debts, then will go to Miami Aug. 20 for the Republican National Convention. Then some staffers will return to Washington to start a new underground paper in the fall.

"There are no definite plans yet," he said. Asked if the demise of Quicksilver was the end of Washington's underground press, the staffer said, "It's not the end, for sure."

Quicksilver's good bye issue probably explains its revolutionary determination to start another paper. Under the heading "Propaganda is necessary!", the staff writes, "It is important to politicize everything that is going on in order to get people to come to grips with the oppression they . . . face . . . Revolutionary interpretation of events and struggles will help make it clear who their enemies are and who their allies are."

The self-styled collective had once boasted 10 staff members who lived and put out the paper together complete with staff meetings in the nude. As of yesterday there were four live-in staffers including only one of the original founders—a man named Super. According to a spokesman, there were four or five additional staffers who didn't live in. The collective has operated out of several locations—R Street NW, 17th Street NW—and is apparently now on Adams Street NW, although a spokesman declined to say.

Meanwhile the 12-page last edition features a street map of Miami and advises "non-delegates" to "Bring a helmet" and sturdy walking shoes. Quicksilver's failures are examined in a 103-inch closely typed editorial. The last page features a poem—"Without the cold and desolation of winter. There could not be warmth and splendor of spring"—but there's a phoenix-like farewell buried on page 6. "Stay high," they write, "and remember, WE WILL WIN!!!"